

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER,
1944

Medical Officer of Health: C.S. Hall Smith, M.B., B.Ch., M.R.C.S.,
L.R.C.P.

Sanitary Inspector: R.F. Hudson A.R.San.I.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Report for the year ended 31st December, 1944.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area..... 7592 acres.

Resident Population..... 2845

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1944).. 960

Rateable Value..... £11,016.

Product of Penny Rate..... £44

Swaffham is a Market Town, the centre of a large Agricultural district, upon which industry it chiefly relies. The only other industries of any note carried on in the area are a canning factory and malting.

Transport facilities are supplied by the L. & N.E. Railway Company and the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company.

The town is supplied with gas, water and electricity by Statutory Companies.

The Council own a Cemetery and Recreation Ground.

	Total	M.	F.	
Live Births Legitimate	49	20	29	Birth Rate per 1000 population... 18.2
Illegitimate...	3	1	2	
Stillbirths.....	Nil	0	0	Nil per 1000 total births.
Deaths.....	39	21	18	13.7 per 1000 population.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:-

	Deaths.	Rate per 1000 total births.
No.29 Puerperal Sepsis.....	Nil	Nil
No.30 Other Puerperal Causes.	Nil	Nil

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1000 live births.....	Nil
Legitimate infants per 1000 Legitimate live births.....	Nil
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births.....	Nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages).....	6
Measles (all ages).....	Nil
Whooping Cough (all ages).....	1
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age).....	Nil

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Staff.

The Medical Officer of Health is part-time; the Sanitary Inspector also carries out the duties of Highway Surveyor and Building Surveyor and is a full-time officer of the Council.

Ambulance Facilities.

Facilities for the conveyance of sick persons by ambulance are provided by the joint organisation of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the British Red Cross Society, both of whom have companies in the town. The ambulance is driven by members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and has done exceptionally fine work throughout the year.

Nursing in the Home.

Nursing for sick persons and maternity cases is provided for by the presence of a district nurse resident in the town. There is too much work for one nurse, and when the nursing situation becomes easier, the town should be efficiently served by two nurses - one a maternity and child welfare nurse and the other doing general nursing duties. Extremely good work is being done by the present nurse who is being definitely over-worked.

Treatment Centres and Clinics.

No Venereal Disease Clinic has been established in the town.

The Infant Welfare Clinic meets once a month and is run by the Norfolk County Council. The accommodation for this clinic is very poor, and this is a decided factor in the poor attendance.

Hospital.

The town is served by a cottage hospital which has 1 private room, 3 female beds and 7 male beds and an operating theatre and casualty room. Serious cases are sent to The Norfolk & Norwich Hospital or the West Norfolk and King's Lynn General Hospital. Infectious diseases can be sent to the Norfolk County Council Isolation Hospital at Dereham.

There are no facilities for X-rays or pathological investigation at Swaffham.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.

Water is supplied by the Swaffham Waterworks Co Ltd., The water is chlorinated at its source and the limits of supply is within a radius of 1,500 yards from the Market Cross.

There was a shortage of water in certain parts of the Country resulting from low rainfall, and the Regional Engineer of the Ministry of Health sent out a Circular to Local Authorities and Water Undertakings asking for information with regard to water supply in their districts. As a result of this circular your Sanitary Inspector prepared a report on the position in Swaffham and this was considered by your Water Committee, and the position was considered serious. The daily consumption of water had increased from 48,000 gallons in 1938 to 100,000 gallons (average for 6 days prior to 21st May, 1944). On the night of the 21st May, the Company commenced to turn off the water at the Works from midnight to 6am., and the average consumption for the 6 days following was 80,000 gallons. The practice of turning off the water at night was continued throughout the remainder of the year. Your Water Committee met the Directors of the Company to discuss the situation and the latter promised to let the Council have their "findings" and observations. Copies of the Sanitary Inspector's Report and the resultant letter from the Company were forwarded to the Ministry of Health.

The town water has one serious disadvantage and that is that the water is exceptionally hard. Representations should be made to the Swaffham Waterworks Company Ltd., to soften their water at source, in order to save householders frequent plumbing repairs through furred pipes and wastage of soap.

Drainage and Sewerage.

A combined system of sewerage exists in the Council's area. One slight stoppage occurred during the year the cause being tree roots.

The Sewage Disposal Works are situated on the Watton Road about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town. The amount of sewage to be dealt with has greatly increased in the last few years chiefly due to the number of new houses on the water carriage system. One day's sludge pumping sufficed in 1935, the amount of sludge to be dealt with has gradually increased and it now takes two full days pumping to dispose of the sludge. The Council's post war housing programme including a closet conversion scheme for existing property will further tax the capacity of the works, and an improved method of treatment will be necessary if the works are to function satisfactorily.

Closet Accommodation.

The position with regard to closet accommodation is about the same as reported last year. The approximate numbers of each type of closet are:-

Pailclosets.....	364
Vault closets.....	30
Water Closets.....	504.

Every effort should be made by the Council to convert the vault and pail closets into water closets where they exist as these are a potent source of infection.

Public Cleansing.

The collection of household refuse has continued as in previous years, the number of dust bins being approximately 860. Salvage has continued to be collected during the year.

HOUSING.

The housing situation in the district is rather serious. Your Council have a long list of people requiring houses including men serving in the Forces, people who have come into the town to work and other inadequately housed. There are about 55 houses at present occupied which are the subject of confirmed Clearance Orders or Demolition Orders. These houses are 5 or 6 years older than they were when the orders were made and, in most cases, are consequently in a worse condition. By inspection and the service of informal notices an attempt has been made to keep the houses in question wind and water tight. Sixty eight inspections were made and twenty nine informal notices served, in most cases these were in connection with condemned houses or on receipt of complaints from tenants.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

	<u>Inspections.</u>	<u>Informal Notices.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Drainage..	20	4	Work done.
Factories, Workshops, and Bakehouses.	7	2	Work done.
Slaughterhouses and Butchers' Shops.	122	0	Routine inspection of meat.
Food Shops.	18	0	Inspection of tinned foods etc.,
Cowsheds, Dairies etc.,	10	5	Work done.
Restaurants.	4	1	Work done.

Sanitary Inspections of the area contd.,

	<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Informal Notices</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Verminous and filthy premises	6	1	Action was taken in one case under Sec:84 of the P.H. Act, 1936.
Housing.	68	29	27 - Work done 2 - Outstanding
Nuisances	7	3	Work done
Infectious Diseases	9	0	Reports to M.O.H. and disinfecting etc., Milk supply investigated in connection with Scarlet Fever with negative result.
Caravans	3	0	-
Rats and Mice	4	0	Advice given.
Refuse Collection	5	0	Complaints dealt with
Waterworks	4	0	Re supply situation.
Schools	2	0	Re Conveniences.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply

The whole of the registered premises were inspected during the year, and instructions given to limewhite when necessary.

The Lexham Farms Company built a large new cowshed and dairy and same was brought into use during the year, an Accredited Licence was granted and later a Tuberculin Tested Licence.

Meat and other Foods

Shops and Slaughter Houses have been regularly inspected and usually found to be clean and tidy. The quality of meat has been good.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs.
Approximate number killed	639	3	1187	53
Approx: number inspected	639	3	1187	53
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis.</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	1	-	2	4
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	146	-	5	4
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	23.00	-	159	15.09

Carcases inspected and condemned contd.,

	Cattle	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs.
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	10	-	-	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	120	-	-	4
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	20.34	-	-	9.43

MEAT, OFFAL AND OTHER FOODS CONDEMNED

	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs.
Carcases or parts of carcasses	8067 lbs	150 lbs	756 lbs
Offal.....	6501 lbs	36 lbs	106 lbs
Tinned food (Grocers' shops)	137 tins		
Tinned Meat (Butchers' Shops)	7 tins		
Fish.....	19 1/4 stones.		
Sausage Rusk.....	8 stones.		
Cheese.....	70 lbs.		
Bacon.....	60 lbs.		
Beans.....	3 cwts.		
Flour.....	12 lbs.		
Sponge Cake Mixture.....	161 packets.		

PREVALENCE OF, and CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Notifiable diseases during the year 1944.

Disease	Total cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	6	0	-
Whooping Cough	31	0	1
Diphtheria	0	0	-
Erysipelas	1	0	-
Measles	48	0	-
Pneumonia	1	0	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0	-

Cases notified under age groups

Disease	2-	4-	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65
Scarlet Fever	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	1
Whooping Cough	4	4	17	3	-	3	-	-
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Erysipelas	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Measles	7	12	24	5	-	-	-	-
Pneumonia	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

TUBERCULOSIS

New cases and Mortality during 1944

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
2-10								
10-20			1					
20-30	1							
30-40				1		1		
40-50								
50-60								
60-70		1						
(or over)								

Diphtheria Immunisation.

Diphtheria Immunisation has improved somewhat during the year.

The following are the figures as at the 31st December, 1944.

Children under 5 years..... 75.87%

Children between 5-15 years 43.40%

The District Nurse has done valuable work in advising mothers of young children to have them immunised.

Scabies

Much fewer cases of scabies have occurred in the district than in former war years. This is partly because there are fewer evacuees and partly because the public have become more scabies conscious and apply treatment before the disease is allowed to spread. Disinfestation has been done for the most part in the patients houses.

Tuberculosis

4 new cases were notified during the year.

One death occurred.

The number of cases on the register at the end of the year was 24.

Venereal Diseases.

Only very occasional cases of primary venereal disease have occurred during the year. These are treated at King's Lynn.

General Remarks.

The year has been a healthy one for the population in the district. I would like to stress my remarks re the softening of the water supply and the extermination of pail and vault closets.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

C.S. Hall Smith,

Medical Officer of Health.